

ALAN OF LILLE
(CA. 1120–1203)

French theologian and poet. A prolific writer in Latin, Alan was a leading figure in the "Renaissance" of the twelfth century. His surviving works include disquisitions in practical and speculative theology; sermons; a preaching manual; a theological dictionary; a guide for confessors; an attack on heretics; a book of versified parables; and two substantial poetic allegories, *Anticlaudianus* and *The Complaint of Nature*.

In the last-named work Alan offered original variations on the Early Christian polemic against homosexual behavior as a sin against nature. These animadversions were prompted by the prevalence of sodomy among the clergy of his day, which Alan opposed. In a series of ingenious, if bizarre comparisons, Alan likened sexual inversion to grammatical barbarism. This allegory of grammatical "conjugation," licit or illicit, was to have many successors throughout the Middle Ages. In a more general sense, Alan is a link in a chain of

antihomosexual argument based on the claim that it is unnatural.

BIBLIOGRAPHY. Richard H. Green, "Alan of Lille's *De Planctu Naturae*," *Speculum*, 31 (1956), 649-74; Jan Ziolkowski, *Alan of Lille's Grammar of Sex*, Cambridge, MA: Medieval Academy of America, 1985.

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